



PLEASE DON'T FEED PARK WILDLIFE

Why "Handouts" Hurt

Visitors who offer food to animals and birds may have good intentions, but their "handouts" are more likely to cause harm than to help.

Longstanding park regulations strictly prohibit the feeding of wildlife.

Here's why:

Visitors risk injury if they don't keep a respectful distance. Animals startle easily, and they sometimes react by biting or scratching when people get too close. Also, wildlife carry diseases that can be transferred to humans, such as rabies.

Wild animals lose their natural fear of humans when they are fed. Such animals tend to become a nuisance to park visitors; those that grow too aggressive may have to be destroyed.

When people provide food, wildlife populations increase to levels the natural environment cannot sustain.

This unstable situation is often followed by animal starvation or by outbreaks of disease.



Wild animals, birds, and fish have specialized natural diets, and they can become malnourished or die if given the wrong foods. Because young animals need the proper nutrients to grow, they are particularly vulnerable.

Feeding wild animals creates problems that affect the larger ecosystem. Species that tolerate people gain a competitive edge over species that don't, disrupting the natural balance. Serious ecological problems also result from feeding non-native, semi-wild animals such as feral cats, which prey on wildlife.

You can best help our wild animals by **not feeding them** and by keeping your stored food and trash out of their reach. Thank you for your support!



GRAY DAVIS
Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN
Acting Director, California State Parks